DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 142 EA 018 986

AUTHOR Miller, Errol
TITLE Nature and Needs of Educational Administration in the Commonwealth Caribbean.
PUB DATE Aug 85
NOTE 14p.; In: The Professional Preparation and Development of Educational Administrators in Commonwealth Developing Areas. A Symposium (Barbados, August 26-30, 1985); see EA 018 975.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Administration; Foreign Countries; Needs Assessment; *Political Influences; *Regional Characteristics; *Socioeconomic Influences
IDENTIFIERS British Commonwealth; *Caribbean

ABSTRACT

Education in general and educational administration in particular are functions of the interplay of social, political, and economic forces operative in society. Although the Commonwealth Caribbean consists of 16 unique and sovereign nations, these nations are sufficiently similar socially, culturally, politically, and economically to permit this paper's examination of educational administration in the region as a whole. The paper begins by describing broadly the political, social, and economic forces at work in the region. Among the major themes are liberation, production, pacification, social stratification, culture and socialization, and financial support for education. Common traditions in educational administration are reviewed next, including inservice "apprenticeship" for administrators, the administrator's roles as community leader and social role model, the autonomy of administrators, and central control of administration. Given these factors, certain specific needs of educational administration in the region can be identified, including the need for a thorough and complete description of the current state of the field, the need to develop theory suitable to the situation identified, the need to test the theory thus developed, and finally, the need to act on the results of this process rather than prior to careful study. (PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D.G. Marshall

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED276142

NATURE AND NEEDS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

by

Errol Miller
Faculty of Education
University of West Indies
Mona,
Jamaica

EA 018 986

Introduction

The education sector is integrally related and profoundly bound to politics, social stratification, culture and the economy. This is a generalization that could be applied to education where ever it is found. The fulcrum of the inter-play of these forces resides firmly in educational administration. Through educational administration these inter-locking factors fashion and shape the educational system. The variety of ways in which education is administered in different countries is testimony to the multitude of permutations and combinations of the ways in which education, politics, sociology and economics can mutually influence each other.

The Commonwealth Caribbean consists of sixteen different countries, each treasuring its distinctive features and jealous of its sovereignty. While the uniqueness of each country cannot be denied, the fact of their common history, culture, language, social and economic structure is equally incontestable. The commonalities sufficiently outweigh the distinctive features to make it possible to speak of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries as a common grouping or as a region. The interplay of political, social and economic forces and their impact on education tend to follow similar trends and patterns. It is therefore meaningful to attempt to describe in broad and general terms the nature of the educational administration in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The general thesis of this paper is that education in general and the educational administration in particular, is a function of the interplay of social, political and economic forces operative in each society. From this point of view therefore, any description of the nature and needs of educational administration in the Commonwealth Caribbean must commence with some broad descriptions of the ways in which social, political and economic forces have been linked to the educational system and with its administration.

Political Themes

The major political themes in education in the Commonwealth Caribbean can be briefly described as follows:

a) Liberation -

The aboriginal theme of Caribbean education has been liberation. It is also by far the strongest and most persistent. Its first advocates and benefactors were the poor whites, during the slave society, who failed to make it rich and were virtually trapped in the West Indian colonies. Invariably, their more fortunate peers had a posthumous conscience concerning this entrapment and established the liberation policy in their wills, which provided sums of money to serve as endowments through which schools could be established. The expectation was that education would be the means of redeeming the children of the poor whites from the fate that had befallen their parents. The next groups to approach education from this liberation perspective were the Jews of Jamaica and the brown people of all Caribbean countries. They fought vigorously and actively for access to the endowed schools. In order to enhance and consolidate such social gains as they had made they fought for and eventually were granted their civil rights between the last decade of the eighteenth century. An integral part of the struggle for

their civil rights was access to education in order to help them overcome the limitations and constraints on their own human development conditioned by the structures of the society.

No where is the liberation theme more clearly demonstrated then in the provision of mass of elementary education in 1834 for the children of ex-slaves consequent upon the abolition of slavery. The general expectation of the slaves and their supporters was that they, through education, would be able to achieve their hopes and aspirations like all other disadvantaged groups had done before. In latter years the more recent immigrant groups of Chinese, Indians, Syrians and Lebanese, have all used the education system in similar ways.

At first the liberation theme was so diametrically opposite to the focus of Caribbean societies that it could not be accommodated in the official policies and provisions of the state. It is not accidental therefore, that education was provided by charitable organizations and the church before it became the responsibility of the state. Given the history of slavery and colonialism in the Caribbean it is not surprising that the liberation theme should be both strong and deep rooted historically. It is the theme that all disadvantaged groups in the society's history have used in their struggles to break the shackles of restraint, constraint and limitations placed on their human development by the circumstances of the society's social and economic organization.

In modern times this liberation theme is manifested in the populist approach to education by current politicians in all Caribbean countries. The stated intention of all modern day politicians in the Caribbean is to provide more and better education especially for the disadvantaged groups within the society. This has accounted for the remarkable consistency of domestic policy in which each succeeding regime seeks to improve and build on the educational policies of the previous regime. To this point in time succeeding regimes have not fundamentally dismantled the educational structures and provisions that it was bequeathed by its predecessors. The general impression given is that in fact each political regime is stumbling over the other to do more and better for education than the previous regime. One has to understand this pattern not in terms of the enlightened educational understanding of the political directorate but rather in terms of the strength of the liberation theme as a vote getter Caribbean politics.

The liberation themes translated into various policies has traditionally been related to academic education oriented to external examinations with international currency. The type of education sponsored by this theme is not related to functional economic considerations but rather, to that which will confer on the individual the greatest social status respect and recognition and will gain him access to education at the highest levels inside and outside of Caribbean society. This is not to say that an academic orientation is valued in and for itself but rather, it is the type of education which the ruling classes within the Caribbean have accorded the highest recognition.

There is no theme that has been more consistently criticized and opposed than the liberation theme. Its survival has not depended upon the strength of the attack but rather, on two essential elements.

1. that it is related to the type of education that the powerful have prescribed for their own children, and

2. that it has had the weight of support in terms of the numbers of people in the society who look to education as the means of changing their disadvantaged status, in removing the injustices that have constrained their lives and in according them greater life chances.

b) Production -

It is the theme that has motivated participation in the educational system by the mass of Caribbean peoples.

The second major political theme in Caribbean education has been production. By the production theme one is speaking about relating education to the economic opportunities that are available in Caribbean society and producing the numbers of skilled persons needed to fill the manpower needs of the economy. This emerged as a significant theme right after the emancipation of slavery and the establishment of mass elementary education. It has been the favourite theme of those who command the economy. Its rallying cry has been more technical skills oriented education to fill the manpower needs of commerce, industry and agriculture. The interest groups in the society who have been most vocal and articulate concerning this theme historically, have been people who have advocated it not for their own children but rather, as the theme that should serve as the guiding light for the children of the masses. This inherent contradiction has always weakened the arguments presented. In large measure, the mass of Caribbean society who have regarded the production theme as the fall back position. It is that which one accepts when the liberation aspirations have not been successful.

By and large, the state has always been more comfortable with policies related to this theme than to the liberation theme. However, successful implementation of policies related to this theme has only come in post-war developments in the Caribbean education.

By and large, modern Caribbean governments have all embraced this theme within the context of the development scenario. The general tenets of this approach is that the continued development of Caribbean economies depend to great extent upon the training of skilled technicians and agricultural workers by the school system. The function of the school is that of supplying the manpower needs of the economy. Most of the development aid to education has been justified by this scenario. In the main, funding agencies have not provided aid to education to support the liberation theme but rather, the production theme.

The focus of policies predicated on the production theme is the training of persons from the school system with marketable skills within the existing Caribbean economies. By and large, it has targeted the middle and lower level occupational tasks within the economy. The examination emphasis is not as great, neither is there any over-riding interest in producing individuals who have skills at a level which would give them international currency. The major emphasis is supplying the local manpower needs of Caribbean economies.

It is interesting to note that almost every educational development planned by the state using the development or production theme as its basis have had to cope with the influence of the liberation theme. For example, Technical High Schools established to train technicians has increasingly focused on educating candidates for engineering and other higher level occupational pursuits.

It is interesting to note that political regimes when campaigning for office usually make promises concerning educational policies which cater to the liberation aspirations of the mass of the population, yet as government, invariably, they develop and implement policies which is predicated on the basis of the production theme. The problem for educational administration and educational administrators is the adjustment of those policies so that they cater to some of the social demands of the major consumers of education in the society. While the provision of education is usually based on the production theme, participation in education by the large mass of Caribbean peoples is on the basis of the liberation theme. The tension between these two perspectives are evident at all levels of educational administration of education in Ministries of education, the liberation theme tends to dominate the institutional administration of education in schools.

c) Pacification -

A third theme around which educational policies have evolved is that of pacification. It is not as prominent or pronounced as either the liberation or the production themes. Nevertheless, it is a major theme. The pacification theme emerged with the concern of the ruling classes that in the establishment of mass elementary education consequent upon the abolition of slavery. They support elementary schools because they perceived education as the means to prevent the ex-slaves from taking revenge on their former brutal masters. The slaves society was maintained by coercion. With overt coercion being removed officially social peace and order had to be maintained by some other mechanism. The planter class saw education as the mechanism which could achieve these ends.

The amelioration measures which have followed major social upheavals in the Caribbean have always included educational reforms. For example, after the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865, the new Governor, Sir John Peter Grant, instituted major educational reforms designed to alleviate the concern of the black population about the quality of education being provided them. Similarly, after the 1938 riots in the Caribbean, the Morin Commission of Enquiry recommended a number of educational reforms.

Developments in modern Caribbean societies have also included the pacification themes. For example, the introduction of free education at the secondary and

university levels, within the Caribbean have been instituted by the political directorate of free independent societies to convince them of the concern and commitment of the political directorate to the concerns and interests of the poor

The pacification theme has been concerned with three major facets of education. First, access to education. It has always emphasized gaining greater access on the part of disadvantaged groups to education especially those aspects and levels of education that traditionally have been reserved for the privileged classes. While the concessions made to disadvantaged groups have never fully met the criteria of social justice, to date they have been sufficient to convince those groups that progress is being made on their behalf. The second concern has been quality. The promise to provide quality education for the children of disadvantaged groups is a perennial one in Caribbean education. While this promise has been more honoured in the breach than any other it has kept recurring. The third concern is that of content. To ensure that the content of education in terms of what is taught in the curriculum in schools is as noncontroversial as possible. It is interesting to note that while Marcus Garvey is widely revered as a National Hero in Jamaica and his exploits celebrated every year with suitable public functions the philosophy and opinions of Marcus Garvey is not on the curriculum of any subject in any school. By and large, this work of Marcus Garvey is as subversive in the 1980's to Jamaican society as it was in the 1920's. Hence, while the society reveres the man in nostalgic terms from the safe distance of the intervening decades, it scrupulously avoids the consideration and study of his message in the content of subjects studied in schools.

d) Interplay of Themes -

These policy themes are not equally exclusive. In fact, there is constant interplay and inter-relationship between them. Nonetheless, they are not exactly interchangeable. Hence, at times an administrator has to choose between being an agent of the state, and accomplice of the student or an apologist of the status quo. These choices are never easy and like all choices they have their consequences.

Stratification and Socialization Patterns

There are a number of social patterns which constitute parameters within which the educational system operates. By and large, educational administration have accepted these parameters and have worked within them. For the purposes of this paper, it is necessary to identify and discuss two of these patterns.

a) Social Stratification and the Structure of the Educational System -

The structure and organization of the educational system mirrors and reflects the social stratification of Caribbean societies. The general tendency is for the children of the privileged classes to attend fee paying infant and preparatory schools while the children of the disadvantaged groups attend the public primary schools free. At the secondary level, by and large, the children of the privileged classes are disproportionately congregated in the high status segments

of the secondary system following largely academic programmes in prestigious schools. This is notwithstanding the various selection procedures that have been established in almost all Caribbean countries. On the other hand the children of the disadvantaged groups are disproportionately skewed in their representation in technical and vocational programmes or conversely, in programmes dealing with functionally literacy offering a level of education just marginally above basic primary education.

Notwithstanding these inequities in the social structure and the social composition of the population of various types of schools, the educational system is the major means of upward social mobility for the disadvantaged groups. Throughout the Caribbean greater opportunity is given to lower class girls than to lower class boys. This is related to both child-rearing practices in Caribbean societies and also to the selection procedures at eleven or twelve plus.

The major broker institutions as far as mobility is concerned is the high school and the teachers' college. Teachers' college or normal schools have a history of close to 150 years in the Caribbean. Similarly, high schools can date their existence to just over a hundred years. These institutions through different mechanisms are largely responsible for the emergence of a black middle class within Caribbean societies. More recently, the broker role has extended to UWI but to date, there has been little empirical analysis of the role of the University in this regard.

Increasingly, the society has accorded to the school the responsibility for allocation occupational opportunities. The examination system and the subjects students are allowed to sit are the major mechanisms by which this role is performed. Over the last decade, there has been a smooth transfer of the examining function from Cambridge and London Universities to the Caribbean Examinations Council. While the examining bodies may have changed the basic relationships and mechanisms remained in tact.

b) Culture and Socialization -

Given the fact that the educational system in the Commonwealth Caribbean developed during the period of British colonialism, it is not surprising that the culture of the school has always been distinctly British. Although the British were always a minority within Caribbean society and a small one at that, by virtue of their position as the kiss and kin of the colonizing power their culture was dominant in Caribbean society. As far as the school was concerned British culture in terms of language etiquette and attitudes was proper, good and respectable. All other cultures especially the creole culture was improper, bad and disreputable. Accordingly, they should be left at the gate of the school and not brought inside. Where for example, an unfortunate child forgot to leave his creole culture at the gate and brought it into the school, such an infraction was an appropriate reason for disciplinary action.

Because the privileged classes always imitated the British overlords, the culture of the school was merely reinforcing their own efforts to be anglocized. As such the school played a supporting socialization role with respect to the home. In the case of the child from the disadvantaged groups, process and promotion

through the educational system depended on the degree to which the child was successful in shedding his own native culture and adopting the anglocized patterns. This invariably, was one of the requirements of upward social mobility. This was the price that had to be paid. This was to be reflected in language, etiquette, attitude and deportment.

With the coming to Independence of Caribbean states and the departure of the British, Caribbean identity has increasingly been located in the creole culture. That which is distinctly Jamaican, Barbadian, Trinidadian, St. Lucian, St. Vincentian, Dominican, Kittian, Bahamian, Guyanese, Belizean, is in fact, the culture of the folk language, etiquette, attitudes and deportment. While this is adequately accepted in plays for cultural evenings festivals and carnivals, it is not to this point reflected in the mainstream culture of the school. The remarkable resistance and resilience of traditional British culture as the mainstream culture of the school is explained by a remarkably simple mechanism. Contrary to the propoganda of certain elements within the Caribbean, it is not maintained by the conspiracy of the ruling group through some devious mechanism.

In most societies probably seventy or eighty per cent of the teaching force for example, at the primary level is recruited from rural lower class young people. Through a combination of high school and teachers' colleges, they have been afforded upward social mobility. Their teacher status makes them new recruits into the middle class. It is well documented that the most militant and zealous defenders of any cause are the most recent and newest recruits. In addition, the administrators at both the national and institutional level, as well as many members of the political directorate, are themselves new recruits to the upper middle and upper classes of the Caribbean societies. By virtue of their large numbers and control for the system, administrators and teachers together, without conscious deliberations insist on the children following the traditional practices which they have only recently overcome and mastered.

Yet there is sufficient contradiction and paradox in the situation to cause serious cracks and to create increasing the widening gaps. This has led to more and more teachers and administrators willing to permit some variant of the creole culture into the culture of the school in certain controlled and limited ways.

Economic Relationships

Historically, it was accurate to speak of the delinquent state as far as financial support for education was concerned. In its aboriginal form the state left education to private individuals and the church. Caribbean Colonial states almost had to be coerced into funding education. Even when this responsibility was assumed the concern was always to fund education at the lowest cost possible which would allow the system to function in some fort of a fashion.

In the modern Caribbean only three of four states have managed to shed the cloak of delinquency - Barbados, British Virgin Island, Bahamas and possibly, Trinidad and Tobago. In the other states the provision for education in terms of numbers of children to be schooled and the quality of that schooling is below what could reasonably be regarded as adequate. One is here referring to number of school buildings and their adequacy in terms of furniture and equipment; the provision

of books and teaching materials, support services assistance to poor children with the wherewithal to attend school; the adequacy of teachers' salary and the level and standard of training of the teaching force and the support for the instruction programme, including systematic and comprehensive supervision and evaluation has never been met on a system-wide basis although particular schools have achieved excellent standards.

Although some recent governments in some Caribbean countries have tried to reverse the historical patterns the accumulative effect of centuries of neglect cannot be readicated overnight. One unfortunate aspect is that the expectations by some members of the political directorate and the public at large, for spectacular improvements have been unrealistic, given the circumstances and the nature of education itself. This has led to disillusionment even among strong advocates of the primary of education. The spending of vast sums of money on education over a short period of time cannot in and by itself reverse deep rooted and entrenched patterns. This is one of the dilemmas educational administration faces in the allocation of resources to education. Can it refuse some of the resources allocated to education in times of plenty? If all is accepted, can it meet the expectations of the providers?

Bahamas and Barbados constitute interesting divergence form the general stereotype of the delinquent state. These states could not be reasonably labelled delinquent with respect to the provision for education. Bahamas, however, is a society in which education is devalued when compared to status of its currency in other Caribbean countries. The standards achieved are certainly not commensurate with the provision and in often below that achieved in other Caribbean states.

The usual explanations given is that almost all students graduating from school are assured of reasonably remunerative employment, hence the drive and the motive for high achievement in education to gain employment is not htere. Given the relatively high standard of living in the Bahamas, this explanation appears plausible. It is also necessary to note the relative ease with which Bahamian can obtain visa to the United States.

The case of Bahamas seems to indicate a curvilinear type of relationship between educational provisions and achievements and the economy. Great deficiency and sufficiency can produce the same results for different reasons. Educational Administrators in both setting may be facing the same problems but need to address them in entirely different ways.

Barbados contrasts both with the stereotypes of deficiency and devaluation. Educational standards in Barbados are among the highest in the region and so too is the standard of living. The question becomes, what makes Barbados different from the other states? Certainly the answer is not economic. Certainly the demands and challenges to educational adminstrators are different.

In most Caribbean states times of economic boom are correlated with periods in which new developments take place in education. These can take a variety of forms including development to expand the system and to improve quality. Conversely, time of economic recession correlates with period of retrenchment in

education. The net result is a cyclical pattern of solving and unsolving educational problems in different eras and the recurrence of both problems and solutions.

Certainly the economic clearly alternatively favours those who would wish to change the status quo and those who would wish to retain it. Economic prosperity is the green light for change, recession, the red light signalling reversal. Clearly this interplay of economic and political forces places educational administration in the crossfire of opposing interest groups in the society.

Traditions in Educational Administration

There are a number of almost entrenched traditions within educational administration in the Commonwealth Caribbean. It is important to identify some of these.

a) Inservice Apprenticeship -

The majority of educational administrators in the Caribbean are prepared for their administrative responsibilities informally through a system of inservice apprenticeship. Invariably, persons selected for administrative positions in the school system have been teachers for a number of years. One of the unwritten qualifications for an educational administrator in the Caribbean is that he must have had a number of years teaching experience. This takes primacy over professional training of the teacher since some untrained graduates are able to move into administrative positions without professional training as teachers but with years of experience in the classroom. The unwritten assumption is that in order to administer education one must be familiar with it from the perspective of the teacher and must have school and classroom experience. In most instances teachers get their first administrative experience in acting positions when the substantive holders of posts are off on leave or out of the school system for some time. Through these temporary interludes they get a chance to be exposed to the responsibilities and at the same time those who make the decision with respect to proportion to administrative positions are given the opportunity to observe the teacher in administrative positions. Ideally, persons promoted to the positions of principals and vice-principals are successful teachers who have won the confidence of the peers and that of those in authority. This holds true for the posts of Head of Department, Principals, Vice-Principals.

Ministries of Education usually recruit people for their central administrative functions from the ranks of the teaching profession. This is true whether it is officers for curriculum evaluation or for territorial supervision. In many instances these officers are first exposed to Ministry responsibilities through projects and special operations and also involvement of various Ministry Committees. Through a process of informal observation and the assignment of specific tasks the Ministry then recruits such persons into substantive positions as chief education officers, permanent secretaries and other top administrators within the system.

Invariably, where administrators receive formal training in Educational Administration it usually comes in the context where those individuals are already occupying administrative posts. The Caribbean has not yet moved to the position where a pool of persons trained in the administration is created within the system and then the various opportunities arise for them to be promoted to administrative posts. This pattern of preparation of administration is strongly biased in favour of the administrators continuing and perpetuating the status quo. It virtually ensures that the persons promoted are "safe". In other words, might bring about improvements but not radical change. It also has no mechanism in and by itself to introduce new ideas that are not already informing the basis of operation within the system. It also ensures that the persons who are promoted and have the greatest facility in negotiating the structure are those with some amount of commitment to that structure.

It is necessary to note that the transition from school administrator to national administrator within the Ministry of Education calls for certain significant changes. Invariably, at the school level the liberation themes in terms of policy and practice are most strongly manifested because of its closeness of contact with parents and students. On the other hand, at the level of the Ministry of Education production and the pacification themes, invariably dominate. The person making the transition from school administration to national administration is called upon the make certain adjustments and accommodations in order to be able to successfully negotiate the national administrative structure.

b) Community Leader -

The successful school administrator in the Caribbean is invariably also a community leader. His responsibilities and activities certainly does not cease with the school. Although the specific type of community activity with which the principal is engaged varies considerably within the Caribbean according to the type of commuity in which he is located, principals and head teachers are involved in church work, in agricultural organizations, in youth programmes, adult education programmes, sports administration, politics, citizens associations and several other types of specific community activities.

This type of involvement on the part of school administrators is most visible and obvious where the school is located in a community with geographic and demographic boundaries clearly drawn. While one is not aware of any great body of empirical research the general impression is that the degree of involvement and quality of community service rendered by the principal or head teacher is positively related to his effectiveness to mobilize the community in ensuring acceptable standards of education within the school. Even where formal programmes of preparation exists for educational administrators, in many instances training in community leadership is not given the weight of emphasis commensurate with the degree to which principals have been involved in communities across the Caribbean. The longevity and strength of this tradition would seem to be sufficient to warrant community leadership training as an integral part of the preparation of educational administrators.

c) Role Model -

Teachers in general and principals in particular are expected by the vast majority of people in the Caribbean to be role models. This is to be true inside and outside of the school. The general stereotype is of a dignified modest living, self-sacrificing, strong, dedicated individual with the gift to perceive talent in others and the ability to inspire its development. It also includes that of the faithful, loyal, persistent idealist who at great expense to himself, is totally committed to the advancement of his students and his community. However, unrealistic these expectations may be, those who are able to satisfy them are accorded high respect despite the difficulties thay may have in surviving the harsh economic realities of the real world. Teachers, principals and general members of the public are equally responsible for the development and continuation of this stereotype. Many principals have not been able to comply with the requirements and have attempted to break the mold. Invariably this is followed by some social astrocism and loss of respect and in some cases, effectiveness. Those who have been able to meet the stereotype have in most instances been accorded great accolades but have been consigned almost to poverty in their old age unless they had some other means of support during their teaching career.

d) Autonomy -

There are some administrative structures within the Caribbean which permits educational administrators especially at the secondary and tertiary levels of the educational system, a fair degree of autonomy. In the systems that permit this autonomy teachers are not civil servants, they are employed to boards which are appointed to run the schools and which have a legal status in law. Invariably in these systems the church continues to play an important role in the ownerships and/or management of the school system. In such systems, principals play an important role in the selection of staff, the selection of students, the expenditure of funds and the management systems that are employed to run the school. They are accountable to the board directly and only to the Ministry for financial and final appointments. The administration of education in systems which permit this degree of autonomy is of necessity different from systems in which such autonomy is not present.

e) Central Control

The tradition of central control is the parallel to the tradition of limited autonomy. Systems with this structure usually involve the Ministry owning and operating the majority of schools and with the teachers being civil servants. Selection of students, teachers, allocation of budget, promotions, transfers of principals and teachers, and the acquisition and distribution of supplies, are all centrally determined by the Ministry of Education. In systems structured on this basis of central control the role and functions of the administrators in the Ministry and in the school is based on a different set of relationships than in the system which permits a limited amount of autonomy.

f) Needs -

The needs of educational administration in the Commonwealth Caribbean arise from the interplay of policy themes, social patterns, economic relationships and educational traditions. One is here approaching the idea of needs from the point of view of those concerned with developing programmes for the formal preparation of administrators for the Caribbean. One can identify at least four different needs that should not be overlooked.

1. The need for description. It is necessary to have thorough and comprehensive descriptions of educational administration as it is being practised at the national and institutional levels in all Caribbean countries. There is almost the need for accurate and complete case studies. This could almost be regarded as baseline data from which different activities can be pursued.

2. Theoretical synthesis. From a base of accurate descriptions it should be possible to develop theory concerning administration emanating from the Caribbean experience. It could be that existing theory is already sufficiently powerful and capable of incorporating Caribbean experience in a meaningful and constructive way. But the possibility also exists that the specificity of the circumstances in which administrative theories have been developed are sufficiently at odds with Caribbean experience as to make the mere adoption of such theory not feasible. Conversely, it may be that the wide variety of experiences that make up the Commonwealth Caribbean is sufficient to generate a more universal and inclusive approach to administration theories which tend to reflect largely first world milieus. Whatever the specific situation, it would seem that there is the necessity for some theoretical synthesis that is both used at the professional academic level to understand the processes involved as well as at the practical level, to allow the practitioners to more perfectly understand the systems in which they are acting within that system.

3. Empirical analysis. The development of any set of theoretical assumptions is for the purpose of pursuing empirical analysis which will validate, modify or disprove the theoretical assumptions. The whole purpose is to create a body of knowledge that would help to provide a scientific basis to the art to educational administration.

It can be seen from the above that one had not taken and defined as a need any attempt to improve educational administration. One has taken the position that before improvement can meaningfully take place, one must understand the context and content of educational administration in the Caribbean. It could well be that educational administration in the Caribbean is functioning at its maximum level of efficiency given all the constraining circumstances that exist. It could also be that given the circumstances, this is the only way in which it can operate. It may be that administrators within the system currently are mere scapegoats of circumstances which they did not create or over which they have very minimal control. One has taken the position therefore, that before one can pursue with missionary zeal, improvements in efficiency and effectiveness, one must be able to give them some reasonable definition within the particular context and to understand more fully the variables than can be manipulated in producing such results. It would seem therefore, that the need for better understanding far supersedes the need for immediate action.